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that not to understand that is proof of brutality. One is very sorry the author found Gilbertian absurdity here; such an accessibility to laughter is deplorable. Again, in the face of the *Man who Built the Pyramids*, Mr. Chesterton would conceive a face "swarthy and secret, ponderous, lowering, staring, or tropical or Apollonian (misspelled) and pure," and he does not like Blake's picture of him. But if it is true, as archæologists tell us, that the pyramids were built under the whip on bread and leaks, and that the king had an inexhaustible supply of time and human lives and, so far as he could, used up both, perhaps he did have the face of an evil idiot. Again, Blake may have thought longer and seen straighter than Mr. Chesterton.

THE NEW LAOKOON: AN ESSAY ON THE CONFUSION OF ARTS. By IRVING BABBITT. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910.

"There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion," said Bacon, and the kernel of the nut is the whole world of romanticism. In the same brief essay on Beauty—it is just a page and a half long in Pickering's edition—he set another phrase even more pregnant and more surprising: "For no youth can be comely but by pardon and considering the youth so as to make up the comeliness." There are times when we try to consider a sort of youth so as to make up the pardon. Here comes a book called *The New Laokoon: an Essay on the Confusion of the Arts*. It is a curiously young book; despite the author's maturity, the book is young in its cocksureness, in its ingenuous display of a bit of out-of-the-way learning, in its employment of the question-begging and libelous epithet, in its naïve and rather silly contempt for women, its irrelevant apology for religion, its abuse of the logical devices, and its want of the essential logic of fair play. It is young to be so evidently more interested in oneself than in ideas. The subtitle begs the whole question. The main title must be a magnificent bit of effrontery, since it cannot stand for paucity of invention. The new Laokoon should be better than the old and Mr. Babbitt a bigger man than Lessing. But the book, though serious and earnest, is in no wise illuminated or stamped by genius. The author must have got up his seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century critics very carefully, but he has nothing to add to them by way of making them come alive, as criticism sometimes does. He has sorted out a little terminology to use, as the late Matthew Arnold said, "in my sense of the word"; but, unfortunately, the definitions are not indexed and not easy to find, and no one would accept the paragraph on page 110 as a just definition of romanticism, and for the curious and unlikely use of *humanism* one is referred to another of the author's books. Mr. Babbitt uses "lower" and "higher," "above" and "below" the reason, light-heartedly, but who is to determine the point from which the measurement is to be taken, himself or the genius who has stirred his spleen? He reasons in such terms as "wholesome," "subliminal," "evidence of hyperæsthesia," "the neurotic school." But thereby he commits *non sequitur*. Medicine and æsthetics cannot make a syllogism between them. He condemns by unmistakable implication (on page 12) the sort of man to whom *dago* and *chink* are epithets of contempt, not mere generalization of racial affinities wider than nationality, but he himself uses the word feminine to stand for an "integral corruption of the higher parts of human nature" (page 236).

The author is a well-meaning person who does not always see where he is going. If he saw he would not lay such doleful stress on his melancholy certainty that modern writing is all intended "for women and men in their unmasculine moods." He himself would stop writing, for one. If he had more of humor and more of that logic which underlies humor, he might have saved himself from misinterpreting the tender irony of Sainte-Beuve's line on Lamartine, and he would not assert so passionately that "man actually grows by moving in different directions simultaneously." Man cannot; nobody can. If he had but a little more of that masculine temper he so admires—though in truth the terms of sex have no more place in æsthetics than in cookery—he would find less unseemly epithets for those who instead of relegating the senses to the mire prefer to redeem them with the soul and make a sacrament according to the ancient definition: the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.

But signs and correspondences are not to the author's taste. He wants *le genre tranché*. Everything else is an "intellectual muddle." Colored hearing, programme music, word-painting, are abnormal, irreligious, unhuman, and in a chapter apiece they are set beyond the pale. The case against them is not very clear: two arguments recur intermittently. One is formulated briefly in the Preface and is the old argument of abuse. "With the spread of impressionism, literature has lost standards and discipline, and at the same time virility and seriousness; it has fallen into the hands of æsthetes and dilettantes, the last effete representatives of romanticism." We have heard this before; Aristophanes said it and said it better. The other argument is just as old, the argument of the common level. In brief, it runs: Every one does not feel this way, therefore no one ought to feel this way. Incredible as it may seem, this is the entire thesis of Chapter V:—because an exact and pregnant epithet cannot arouse a picture in the ignorant and obtuse, therefore it should not be employed; because a musical phrase may evoke a different concrete image, though admittedly an identical mood of feeling, in two hearers, therefore it should not be employed; because to the scientist and philologist and man of business, tone-deaf to the music of words, any other phrase would do as well as "the innumerable murmur of all the sea," therefore it should not be employed. Suggestiveness is a matter, in part, of the reader. But some readers may miss and some misunderstand, therefore there should be no suggestion. Incredible as this may sound, it is to be found on pages 153-4, 168-9, 183. There is no mistaking the clear, downright English of it.

From all this it appears that Mr. Babbitt cannot get away with romanticism. That is his own affair! He may traduce Rénan and J. K. Huysmanns, and call Bacon and Sainte-Beuve and Matthew Arnold into court, and vilify Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, and Englishmen. The men are mostly dead or on the Continent and will never know. In a sense, however, it is not the author's own affair, but ours, for he drags Plato and Aristotle into the discussion, and undertakes to define the difference between classic and romantic art, as a love of the wonderful rather than the probable. This is no place for snipping out definitions or one might suggest the love of the great rather than the mediocre, or the individual rather than the common, or even the strange rather than the familiar. The author's wonderful-probable turn will hardly serve. Indeed, the whole paragraph in which it figures is neatly and accurately incompatible with the famous

passage in the Postscript to *Appreciations* where Walter Pater defined the romantic element in art as "strangeness in beauty." Our author called on Arnold, but a greater than Arnold said that. He summoned Bacon, but Bacon proves the prime witness for the defense. That "strangeness in proportion which Bacon noted in all excellent beauty does in our later days lead men rather than form to paint pure color; rather than tunes to compose difficult harmonies; rather than facts or platitudes to write phrases that shall mean more than they say and send the reader farther than they go. A neat mind is good in its way; an exact mind is comfortable; a limited mind has its advantages. The real trouble with the limited mind is that it wants to shut every one else into its own confines, to measure the universe with its tiny hand rule. The expansive temperament which so annoys our author, at least, lets every one else expand at will.

The New Laokoon utters several truths by the way. Its facts are usually correct. If the conclusion drawn is usually wrong that is not the fault of the minor premise. The book has the merit of being, to the limit of the author's appreciation, serious. But it takes a big man to preach restriction and an impassioned spirit to enforce the weight of law.

HOW TO KNOW ARCHITECTURE. By FRANK E. WALLIS, A.A.I.A. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1910.

We have heard it objected to this book that "it has not much information for those who know architectural books," but as all teaching from the beginning has been with the purpose of transferring more people from the group of the ignorant to the group of the enlightened we can, even if a little perversely, look on this criticism as a recommendation.

Seriously, then, this is the very strength of Mr. Wallis's book—that it is for people who are not architects. Architects have books in plenty and have had for a long time; books of a size and a thickness to make this little volume seem to shrink in its covers. But such books lie dustily on office shelves, and the American public (from whom, nevertheless, clients are raised up) continue to feed on Baedeker or the more indigestible actualities of Fifth Avenue and Broadway. It would be well if one-hundredth part of the people that our census shows would read this book.

The development of architecture is only an expression of the development of civilization and its history is a large field. This fact is the first barrier that shuts out the general public occupied, as it is, with other things. Mr. Wallis has simplified it because he has gone at it simply. He has divided roughly the history of civilization into a few large periods, and you can see as you follow him how naturally the history of architecture follows these same divisions. "Architecture," he says, "is an accurate and readable human document."

After architecture was once established as a science and an art its development followed the development of trade and prosperity, and its great creative epochs were coeval either with great epochs of material development, as in Rome, France of the Valois and Bourbons, and America of to-day, or else with epochs of spiritual expansion, as the true Gothic in France. As to the styles themselves, the earlier ones were carried along the trade routes, varying as they went and developing or inspiring new movements where they settled; but the styles even in their earliest developments were